

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 SSM-03 OMB-01 ACDA-12 /093 W

-----015384 231210Z /20

R 220911Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7718

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2279

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJ: SHAFIQ WAZZAN COMMENTS ON PARTITION AND CIVIL WAR

1. EMBOFF MET WITH ISLAMIC COUNCIL PRESIDENT SHAFIQ WAZZAN ON APRIL 21. WAZZAN, WHO WAS DEEPLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR LEBANON, SAID THE FOLLOWING.
2. THE MUSLIMS WERE SICK AND TIRED OF THE MARONITES RAISING THE SPECTER OF PARTITION. FOR THE FIRST TIME, PEOPLE IN WEST BEIRUT WERE BEGINNING TO SAY THAT PERHAPS PARTITION WAS NECESSARY. WAZZAN COMMENTED THAT IF THE MARONITES WANTED PARTITION, THEY JUST MIGHT GET IT.
3. AT THE PRESENT TIME "ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE," INCLUDING CIVIL WAR. IF THE MARONITES KEPT MAKING MILITARY THREATS AND TRYING TO "FORCE THE MUSLIMS TO THEIR

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KNEES," THE MUSLIMS WERE GOING TO REACT AND WOULD ENLIST "THE PALESTINIANS, IRAQIS, RUSSIANS OR ANYBODY ELSE AS ALLIES."

4. CAMILLE CHAMOUN WAS MOTIVATED "EITHER BY HATE OR BY FOREIGN INTERESTS." HE SHOWED ABSOLUTEDLY NO INCLINATION TO COMPROMISE. SULEYMAN FRANJIYAH WAS "SOMEWHAT

REASONABLE" AT PRESENT. PIERRE GEMAYEL WAS REASONABLE "FOR A FEW HOURS," UNTIL HE FELT COMPELLED TO TAKE HARDLINE POSITIONS IN ORDER TO KEEP UP WITH CHAMOUN.

5. THE MEETINGS OF THE DEPUTIES OF VARIOUS CONFESSIONS, INCLUDING CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND SAIB SALAM, ON APRIL 18 AND 20 HAD BEEN GOOD FOR FORM, BUT EMPTY ON SUBSTANCE. THE 11-MAN COMMITTEE, WHICH WAS FORMED BY THESE DEPUTIES TO RESOLVE CONFESSIONAL DIFFERENCES, HAD MET THE MORNING OF APRIL 21 AND WOULD BE MEETING AGAIN. WAZZAN DOUBTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD MAKE PROGRESS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES.

6. WAZZAN SAID THAT HE WANTED TO BE OPTIMISTIC THAT A NEW CABINET WOULD HELP SOLVE SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS. HE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD, HOWEVER.

7. COMMENT. WAZZAN REPRESENTS THE MOST CONSERVATIVE, MOST CAUTIONS SEGMENT OF THE SUNNI POLITICAL SPECTRUM. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH US, HE HAS NEVER BEFORE ALLUDED TO PARTITION OR CIVIL WAR. WAZZAN ALSO CLAIMED THAT SARKIS WOULD BE GOING TO DAMASCUS NEXT WEEK, BUT OFFERED NO PREDICTIONS ON THE OUTCOME OF HIS VISIT. PARKER

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